Pradesh faced acute rainfall deficiency as a result of which large areas faced moisture stress. Deficient rains adversely affected the irrigation potential also.

(c) The Government has been taking, overtime, several measures to increase production and productivity of agricultural crops in various parts of the country including Orissa and consequently there is generally a long term upward trend in production of foodgrain crops such as rice, wheat and oilseeds etc. However, the production of agricultural crops tend to fluctuate sometimes, from year to year, due to agro-climatic conditions and to meet such a situation contingency plans are drawn, which are location and condition specific.

Middlemen/Commission Agents between Fruit/Vegetable Growers and Consumers

4296. SHRI K.M. KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made a study of the system of middlemen or commission agents, operating between the growers and the actual consumers of common fruits and vegetables like mango, cabbage, potato, onion, etc.;

(b) if so, the difference between the prices paid to growers and by the consumers, commodity-wise, during the last three months;

(c) the steps taken by Government to facilitate the producers/growers to reach the retail market outlets easily;

(d) whether Government would augment the Infrastructure and also take necessary steps to cut down the system of middlemen; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI), an attached office of Ministry of Agriculture has conducted the following studies on marketing of horticultural produce covering price spread :—

(i) Marketing Costs and Margins of Major Agricultural Commodities in India (1985)

(ii) Marketing of Potato in India (1984)

(iii) Marketing of Onion in India (1992)

(iv) Report on Production and Marketing of Pineapple in India (1991)

(v) Study on Post Harvest Practices—Bottlenecks and Remedial Measures of Grapes in Andhra Pradesh (1999).

The DMI has not conducted any study to ascertain the difference between the prices paid to growers and that paid by the consumers during the last three months.

(c) to (e) With a view to review the whole gamut of Agricultural Marketing in the country, the Ministry of Agriculture had set up an Expert Committee on Strengthening and Developing of Agricultural Marketing. The Expert Committee in its report has *inter-alia* recommended the development of market infrastructure and the need to promote direct marketing of agricultural produce by the farmers to maximize their share in the price. An Inter-Ministerial Task Force has been constituted to examine the recommendation and suggest measures for their implementation. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have also been requested to examine the recommendations of the Expert Committee and provide their feed back to the Task Force.

Per Capita availability of pulses

4297. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the per capital per day availability of pulses since independence has gone down from 70 gms. to 36 gms. and their contribution to national food market has reduced from 17 per cent to seven per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that new technologies, both in production and post harvest management, and transfer of these to the end-users are immediately needed to be developed; and

(d) if so, what role the ICAR is playing in the direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) The per capita availability of